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FOREIGN DEPARTMENT

IN CHARGE OF
LAVINIA L. DOCK, R.N.

PROGRESS IN RUSSIA

Miss Ida Hoffman, graduate of the German Hospital, New York, is doing pioneer hospital reform work in Russia and sends the following interesting letter:

SPITAL KANSTADT MALZ,

Radigescht, Lodz, Russia, October 7, 1913.

DEAR —: I know you will be interested to know how I have settled here. After my arrival I found the hospital for which I have been engaged not finished, and it will be so only in about two months from now. The man who wrote me to come, seems a good business man, but I doubt if he really is in sympathy with all my plans. At first I have seen several physicians here (which was probably wrong as they have discouraged me). They all told me that I should go back to America; that hospitals here cannot possibly be run differently than they run them here; that I will not get girls willing to learn nursing, and do the work, etc. They also told me that the superintendent of that new hospital is not an honest man, and other very discouraging things. One day I had occasion to meet the head physician of my new hospital, who is a woman of most interesting personality. After seeing her I have made up my mind to remain. I am now waiting impatiently for my work to begin, though I know it will not be easy.

I have looked up another nurse from America, who came to Warsaw for the same purpose as that which brought me here. That nurse has more favorable conditions to work with. The benefactress of her hospital is a young woman, a graduate physician, who also took a course in nursing in a London hospital, and knows more about nursing than the superintendent of my hospital. She has decided to plan for a training school.

They have made the educational standard for admittance a full gymnasium¹ course. Should they succeed, which I am sure they will, then I think the other hospitals will follow in trying to improve things, and I cannot see why another hospital like mine with the same aims should not have the same advantages also.

I have visited lots of other hospitals here and must say that in the last eight years they have been somewhat improved. One hospital here stands out as a model one, of which I would like to tell you. It was built several years ago by one of the millionaires here, and he saved no money to make it model. And really, it is clean. At the head of that hospital is a German lady (not a nurse), who must be a splendid manager, for one can see that there system prevails. About the nursing, they have it arranged this way: Each ward of sixteen beds has two

¹ High school.

women to take care of the sick and maintain cleanliness. One of them must know how to read and write. She does not know more about nursing than her good heart tells her. Such women get from 15 to 20 rubles monthly. The other woman is of the peasant type, and does all the necessary scrubbing, her salary is from 8 to 10 rubles monthly. Treatments are given by three physicians who live at the hospital. This institution has 124 patients, and it also takes contagious diseases.

About the town. It has over 800,000 inhabitants, is a cloth manufacturing town, very dirty, has bad water, no drainage system, also expensive living, which causes great poverty among the working classes. I was told, though, that outbreaks of infectious diseases are rare here. The native people here believe that the chemical fumes disinfect the dirt, and make the place, regardless of its poor conditions, harmless to live in. . . .

AN ENGLISH INCIDENT

We take the following citation from the *British Journal of Nursing* of recent date.

At the meeting of the Central Midwives Board, held on the 9th inst., Miss Rosalind Paget asked the Secretary:

"Whether any steps have been taken to ascertain if a woman, described in the press reports of the proceedings as connected with a recent prosecution for an offense under the Criminal Law Amendment Act in Piccadilly is a certified midwife, as has been asserted; and, if so, whether it is contemplated to cite her to appear before the Board?"

This pertinent question has arisen out of the following facts:

When Inspector Curry raided "Queenie Gerald's" flat in Piccadilly, it was reported in the press that the door was opened by a woman in nurse's uniform, who was described as "Nurse Betty;" and moreover that she had invited young girls off the street into the flat. This woman's real name was (like that of the procuress she served) kept strictly private by the magistrate before whom the latter was charged.

Upon enquiry, it was ascertained on good authority that "Nurse Betty" had stated that she was a midwife; and the name she gave as her own was found to be on the Roll. Moreover that only one midwife had been certified under such name. This information was given to the Secretary of the Midwives' Board, also to Miss Rosalind Paget (a member of the Board)—in the hope that the case would be taken up and investigated by the Board.

This for two reasons. "Nurse Betty," disguised in nurse's uniform, was engaged in a horrible and criminal trade, aiding and abetting a procuress to ruin young girls.

Through some very powerful influence she was never charged.

Though her name was carefully kept from the public, this woman stated she was a midwife, and gave the exclusive name of a certified midwife on the Roll.

Either she is the person she represents herself to be—in which case her conduct should be enquired into by the local supervising authority; and if a *prima facie* case is established, the same should be reported to the Midwives' Board—or she is not, and the innocent midwife she personates and professes to be, should be protected from the fraudulent misrepresentation of "Nurse Betty."

Certified midwives have a right to protection under the Act.

Thus, it is clearly the duty of the Central Midwives' Board to clear up this mystery.

As for the gross abuse of nursing uniform and the discredit suffered by the profession, from association in the public mind with those engaged in pandering to vice, and in ruining the bodies and souls of women—there is, at present, no redress; and there will be none until trained nursing is organized and protected by Act of Parliament, and registered nurses have power to maintain their own ethical standards.

Nor, we would add, until women have political power.